



# COMMUNICATING *Together*

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Communication Institute, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Vol. 2, No. 1

February 1984





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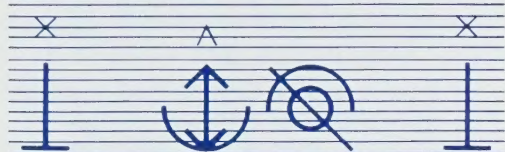
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# COMMUNICATING together



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*Communicating Together* is published quarterly as a means of sharing the experiences, systems and techniques of non-speaking people with their families, communities and the professionals who work with them. Special attention is given to the non-reader's augmentative communication system and the role of Blissymbolics.

**The Blissymbolics Communication Institute** was established in 1975 to facilitate the use of Blissymbolics as a communication system for non-speaking persons around the world.

**BCI Affiliates and Information Centres** are situated in:

**Canada:** Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec

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Through BCI and its Affiliates, over 8,000 instructors have been trained worldwide.

**Blissymbolics** is a system providing comprehensive communication for the non-speaking person. It can be used with a variety of picture systems and technologies, and with traditional orthography — offering a basic structure for the non-reader's augmentative communication system.

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The symbol composition and drawings appearing in articles are in accordance with *Blissymbols for Use*, compiled and edited by Barbara Hehner, and published by the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, Toronto, 1980.

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# Blissymbols Go To India

Σ ^ >| P INDIA

by Sarah Swartz

*Anne Warrick has been a strong advocate on behalf of nonspeaking people for many years. She has been a Presentor for the Blissymbolics Communication Institute since 1974 and is the author of Blissymbols For Pre-school Children (BCI, 1978). Her special interest in helping children with cerebral palsy in Third World countries has taken her to India as well as to Taiwan, where she was sponsored jointly by the University of Guam and the Taiwan National College of Education to give an elementary workshop on Blissymbolics. She is the chairperson for ISAAC's Committee for Developing Countries. After ten years as speech pathologist for the Ottawa Crippled Children's Centre, Anne is presently an independent speech pathologist and consultant.*

In the spring of 1979, when Anne Warrick was first invited as a visiting consultant to the Centre for Special Education in Calcutta, India, no one could predict the profound effect her visit would have on the progress of the Centre nor on the lives of the nonspeaking children who were being taught there. In India, a country with extreme poverty and limited technology, the problems of nonspeaking disabled children seem unsurmountable and have not been addressed until very recently.

The Spastics Society of Eastern India and its school, the Centre for Special Education (CSE), was formed in 1974 to provide services for some of the estimated two to three million children with cerebral palsy in India. Previously there had been no services available for these children, let alone for children who also lacked verbal communication capabilities. From humble beginnings with two students, the Centre grew to provide for 60 daily students and 200 children attending its out-patient clinic. Today it offers assessment and advice to at least 300 beneficiaries from all over India. The Centre's students range

from ages three to 21 and have varying physical and intellectual abilities. A staff of two speech therapists, seven physiotherapists and 20 teachers provide education, physiotherapy and pre-vocational training for these children.

According to Sudha Kaul, founder and principal of CSE, the philosophy of the Centre has always been to seek out new methods of helping its children. In 1979, with five years of experience and this philosophy in mind, the Centre began to seek guidance in the training of its nonspeaking children. In Sudha's words:

"We were aware of technological advances in the West, but we were also aware of the limitations in using technology in our own country. In our city, Calcutta, there are all levels of income groups, and this is reflected in each of our children's individual needs. For many, a wheelchair is expensive and inappropriate in a one-room home. A system which is inexpensive, cross-cultural, broad based and can be child-centered is more practical in our environment and that is why we were interested to hear about Blissymbolics.

A friend of the Centre had visited Canada where in Ottawa she became aware of Blissymbolics. She returned to Calcutta and discussed with me the possibility of Anne Warrick visiting our Centre to start a service for nonspeaking children by providing staff training and sharing her experiences with our speech therapists."

Anne Warrick was, of course, delighted to be contacted by CSE. As soon as funding was arranged through grants from the Canadian government and Match International, she found herself involved in six weeks of intense but rewarding activity at the Centre for Special Education in Calcutta.

## Sudha Tells About Anne's First Visit to India

"During her first visit in 1979, Anne gave an overview workshop about Blissymbolics for our staff. Her enthusiasm and concern for the disabled came through very strongly during the first workshop she ran, as did the urgent need to do something to help non-verbal children to communicate. The simplicity of the Blissymbol system



A class in progress at the Centre for Special Education in Calcutta.



really appealed to us and Anne was able to show how easy it was to teach a 'system' which was cross-cultural. She became an inspiration to all of us — staff and children alike.

We have an older boy, Shombhu, at our Centre and it was Anne's enthusiasm and his reaction to being given a way to communicate which convinced us about the value of alternate ways to talk. Anne's deep concern for the child who had no means to communicate and Shombhu's motivation and excitement made a formidable combination!

Shombhu is now 20 years old — the first Blissymbol user in India. His world is the four walls of the Cheshire Home where he lives and the Centre for Special Education where he attends school. His educational setting provided exposure to learning over the years, but had no means to give any communicative depth. Symbols have allowed him expression and contact with friends. Within the limitations of his surroundings, there is an additional quality now."

### Successful Results

After Anne returned to Canada, the staff at CSE continued using Blissymbolics to work with their nonspeaking students and many of these children have now progressed sufficiently to be integrated into regular classes at the Centre. In a large country where diverse dialects and languages often prevent speaking people from understanding each other, these nonspeaking children have found a means of communicating which goes beyond language barriers.

Pinky and Kuttum are the two youngest nonspeaking children at the Centre. One is from a Gujarati speaking region and the other from a Malayalam speaking region — one from the west, the other from the south. Blissymbols give these children a common language. They are pre-academic children and integrate the use of the symbols into their pre-school curriculum.

Mithu is one of the original two children at the Centre. Today at age 14, alternative communication is her lifeline. She uses an electric typewriter with a head stick for



*Anne Warrick and Shombhu share a conversation.*

school work, but because of the frequent and long electric power cuts which often occur in Calcutta, typewriters cannot be relied upon. Mithu's school subjects are all taught with a word/alphabet board and non-vocal strategies.

Babul Basu, speech therapist at the Centre for Special Education, discusses his experiences with his student, Somu:

"Somu came to our Centre in 1980 at the age of 17 years. He is unable to use his arms and legs and is physically unable to produce understandable speech. He had spent most of his life at home. His parents tried education with private tutors but this proved a failure. Conventional speech therapeutic techniques had failed to help him acquire functional oral speech. In February 1980, we decided to teach him Blissymbolics. We started working with Somu almost every day for half-hour sessions. Soon we discovered that his symbol learning rate, in comparison with his other learning rates, was slow. We visited Somu's home for the first time and discovered that his family expected clear oral speech from him. During a second visit I discovered that his family, his private tutor and his visiting speech therapist had not accepted the alternative method of communication. The first question they asked us was: 'Don't you think that Somu will refuse to talk after

having learnt the alternative communication system?'

With the help of our social worker, I met the professionals and the parents separately, and demonstrated and explained the technique. The parents were shown how Shombhu, another symbol user from our Centre, communicated effectively; how Mithu, a non-vocal severely physically handicapped girl, communicated with her word-board. They were fascinated. Not only did they change their attitude but they also extended their helpful hands to teach Somu Blissymbols at home.

The boy who took three months to learn the first fifteen symbols, learnt fifty symbols in only another three months. Now Somu's lap-tray contains 404 symbols. He uses them at home and in school and communicates effectively with his friends. Somu has become more relaxed, has opened up, and, because of his ever smiling face, is much better accepted by the people at home and in school. At home he has been able to project his own unique personality."

Madhavi Tambay, another speech therapist at the Centre for Special Education, speaks of his experiences at the Centre:

"I came to CSE in July 1981 and was exposed for the first time to



children who were severely physically handicapped and had severe communication problems.

When I graduated from the school of speech therapy in 1972, we concentrated heavily on oral speech, production of sentences and pronunciation. The area of nonspeech communication was a new one. We came across cases which did not respond to prolonged speech therapy. It was a frustrating experience for the patient and the therapist alike. Blissymbols was a way which opened so many doors!

Blissymbols have made life more meaningful for the nonspeaking children at our Centre. They might have made progress without Blissymbolics, but at a much slower pace and with far more frustration."

### Anne's Second Visit to India

In the fall of 1983, Anne Warrick was invited back to the Centre for Special Education to conduct a workshop on "Alternative and Augmentative Communication Systems" for the Spastics Society of Eastern India and the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH). This time there were 24 registrants from all parts of India and with a wide variety of professional backgrounds. Some were already working with nonspeaking children, while others were administrators interested in knowing more about nonspeech from a service delivery perspective. The official registrants were joined by the student body of AIISH. The workshop was a great success and Anne's contributions once again inspired the participants enormously.

Anne's trips to Calcutta have not only made an impact on the recipients of her work. They have also been a very moving experience for her. When asked about what her experiences in India have meant to her and what she remembers the most, she replies:

"Generally, I recall the country as very beautiful and the people as overwhelmingly hospitable. Specifically, I remember the smiles and friendship of the staff and their interest in the welfare of the children and each other. I think about

### Shombhu's Letter

○→← Δ ANNE

Hello Auntie Anne.

?^ ⊥<sub>2</sub> ♥

How are you?

⊥<sub>1</sub> >| λ<sub>B</sub> ○ Δ ANNE

Mr. Basu says Auntie Anne is coming. I am happy.

→| ⊥<sub>1</sub> ♥↑

I have four symbol friends in my school.

⊥<sub>1+</sub> Δ↑Δ 4

• x ∑ ⊥ ♥ +! ±

We saw a drama called Rain Maker in school.

⊥<sub>1</sub> Δ↑Δ λ↓Δ •

Δ⊙ ○

My toe was operated (on).

⊥<sub>1+</sub> Δ<sub>κ</sub> • v ^ • ' ⊙

I went to the hospital.

⊥<sub>1</sub> Δ⊙ Δ

Please come to school.

!♥ →| >| Δ↑Δ

Thanks. Goodbye, Shombhu

♥↑ ○←→ SHOMBHU

*Note: The English given is an interpretation of the meaning intended, and not a word to word translation. The ordering of the symbols follows the native language pattern [eg. the verbs are at the end of the sentence].*

the quality and depth of my friendship with Sudha, whose wisdom and sensitivity has guided the Centre for Special Education to be a 'centre of excellence' on the world scene.

I recall the tenacity and independence of the children which in relation to their physical ability far outweighs that with which I am familiar in the West. Their academic level of achievement literally stuns me.

I suppose in every group of special children there's a special, special person and for me that's Shombhu — one of the men in my life. I remember what it feels like to be called Anne Auntie — not 'you there' — but Anne Auntie. It was music to my ears!"□

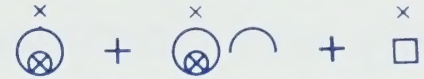
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### Positions Require Augmentative Communication Skills

In the December 1983 listing of positions open for Speech-Language Pathologists, from the Ontario Speech and Hearing Association, five of the ten permanent positions required that applicants have experience and knowledge of augmentative communication. It is reassuring to know that the need for augmentative communication skills is being more prominently recognized.□



# Machines, Computers and Things



## More About Confer

by Shirley McNaughton  
and Katherine Seybold

*Shirley McNaughton is Executive Director of the Blissymbolics Communication Institute and chairperson of the International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). With Katherine Seybold, Administrative Co-ordinator of BCI, she has been instrumental in initiating Confer for use with those interested in Augmentative Communication.*

Confer is a new computer telecommunications tool that provides a highly effective medium for people to exchange ideas, resolve problems and discuss plans with others within a social network. Confer users connect their computer terminals by telephone with a central computer at Wayne State University to exchange messages and participate in discussions.

During the last half of 1983, the Blissymbolics Communication Institute has been administering the use of Confer as a trial project to identify some of the uses of computer conferencing as they relate to the international field of augmentative communication. During this trial period, attention has been focused on administrative procedures and the new skills and routines required of users, in order that this new medium's capabilities can be appropriately utilized. The particular conference being administered by BCI is called IPC:AC (International Project on Communication: Augmentative Communication).

So far, Confer's messaging capability has been the one most frequently used. With the same keystrokes, a participant can send messages simultaneously to several persons scattered around the world. The messages are stored in the central computer, awaiting the receivers' "sign-ons". The next day responses can be expected. All this

happens according to each individual's own schedule. No more need to stay up till after midnight to telephone overseas. No need to interrupt a meeting to respond immediately to an important phone call. Everything happens in the time frame chosen by the user.

In order for this system to work, however, users need to develop a few new habits. A daily checking for messages is important and sending a copy of the message to everyone who would benefit from the information is essential. The computer does the work. The sender just indicates the names of those who need a copy and instantly the computer stores the message in readiness for their "sign-on". Time and space disappear as the telephone lines and main-frame computer transmit and store all the messages and ideas of the Confer users.

As well as providing a new way for clinical cases to be discussed, IPC:AC has proven to be an effective medium for Executive Committee members of ISAAC to exchange information, make plans and jointly work on projects.

People in most major cities in North America as well as in other countries around the world, can gain access to Confer through the public data communications networks.

The exciting November news was the successful joining of Confer by Gunnar Fagerberg of Stockholm, Sweden. In addition to his responsibilities at the Handikappinstitut, Mr. Fagerberg is First Vice President of ISAAC and Chairperson of the Swedish National Committee of IPCAS (International Project on Communication Aids for the Speech Impaired). His involvement in the work of these two organizations can now be maintained on a regular and frequent basis, and is no longer hindered by the extensive time required for an exchange of letters or the high cost of long-distance telephone conversations.

Now that the trial period is over,

the Blissymbolics Communication Institute will undertake in January 1984 a regular Confer service to those interested in augmentative communication. This will provide the opportunity for all those interested in the field to explore this communication medium both for problem-solving and for information exchange. Arrangements for the use of Confer to facilitate the business of ISAAC and IPCAS will be continued and BCI will be conducting more of its business through Confer's messaging capability.

In 1984, we will be concentrating upon the major communication option of Confer — Computer Telecommunication Conferencing. We need to explore together this new way of discussion and debating the issues that face all of us in augmentative communication. Every participant can enter "items" and expect "responses" from fellow members of IPC:AC.

Perhaps, we could try a new communication activity. We would like to propose *Junior Confer* — an opportunity for young people to learn computer communication. If there is a young person in your home (with a micro computer and modem) who would like to join our conference, ask them to write to BCI. What better way to prepare for the technology that will be available to them in their adult years!

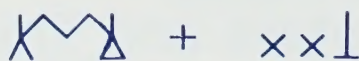
The fee structure and information regarding IPC:AC can be obtained by writing to Katherine Seybold, Blissymbolics Communication Institute.

Let's add a new dimension to *Communicating Together* by Computer Telecommunicating Together. □

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# Family and Community



## I Taught The Teachers

with Andrew and Mark

*Andrew Murphy of Toronto has been communicating with Blissymbols for several years. In this column, appearing in each issue, Andrew and his father Mark share their experiences and those of other families with the special perspective of people who communicate in a special way.*

My augmentative communication consultant, Lynnette Norris, invited me and two other students, Greg Keefe from William Osler School and Heidi Herman from Oshawa, to participate in a "School House Demonstration" for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) which was held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto on November 17, 1983. Lynnette introduced us to the teachers, then we each demonstrated how we communicate. Heidi uses a Bliss board and is able to point to the symbols. Greg uses a Canon Communicator. He is also able to talk and he gave a speech about himself. I talked to Lynnette using eye pointing on my Blissymbol board and I worked on the Apple Computer. It was exciting to teach the teachers. We all had fun.

We ate lunch at the hotel and Lynnette gave each of us a beautiful Blissymbol book *Romeo and Juliet*. We also got T-Shirts that said, "I taught the teachers at CEC."

\*\*\* \*\*

I went to stay at the OCCC Hospital when my parents went away for one week. It was a very hard time for me. Because I am not able to relax in a new situation, I become very tense and I was unable to eat with all the different staff looking after me. I tried to talk to the staff, I tried to get their attention by making noise, but it just didn't work. Because I communicate only with my eyes on my Bliss board, it takes more time for people to talk to me or listen to me. I was mad and I was lonesome, but I had visitors that cheered me up and brought me food. My teachers and friends came.

\*\*\* \*\*

In the past month, I have participated in two anti-nuclear disarmament marches. My teacher and I walked with thousands of other concerned people in Toronto. I felt excited walking with the people who shared the same feelings I had and I felt I was contributing. I think the show on TV "The Day After" was good because it made people think, but it also frightened me.

### Editor's Note:

We heard from Lynnette that the session at CEC was an overwhelming success. The room was filled to capacity (at least 30 people) with standing room only. The session was about an hour-and-a-half long, with each student having about 15 minutes for his/her demonstration. Greg distributed his prepared speech ahead of time in case some in the audience had difficulty understanding him. (They didn't!) He not only showed his Canon Communicator, but also demonstrated the Sharp Memowriter and the Handivoice. Heidi and her mom brought all Heidi's past communication boards to share — from a very early picture board through to special Blissymbol displays — showing the progression to her present one.

Andrew, as he said, had a conversation with Lynnette using eye pointing, and demonstrated communication on the Apple Computer. There was also time for questions at the end. Lynnette was delighted at how well each student "performed" and also at the intense interest shown by the audience. □

**This section of  
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Lynnette Norris with Andrew Murphy, Greg Keefe and Heidi Herman.



# Lucky Me, Part 1

by Kari Harrington

*Kari Harrington was in the original Blissymbol class in 1971 at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. Since then she has completed public school at Robinson Public School in Markham, Ontario. Presently she is in Grade 11 at Langstaff High School in the orthopedic class, where she takes "two subjects with the regular kids."*

## From Kari's Mom

Kari has an Apple now and enhanced with its colour monitor, printer, telephone modem and votrax, it's a lusciously, delicious one.

Born eighteen years ago with a mixed type of cerebral palsy, Kari is still very limited in her physical abilities. She cannot work, sit or stand unsupported or verbally communicate in a functional way. However, she can control one hand — her left one — and this precious hand is one of the factors that has allowed her to enter the world of technology more easily.

It seems an age, since she first learned to use a joy stick to activate a pointer to her Blissymbol display and since she first worked with an electric typewriter. The development and availability of micro-computers marks the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one for our handicapped kids. Kari has had her Apple for a very short time, but each little "byte" she takes of it reveals more and more of the unlimited potential its system offers her.

Although intellectual assessments have always placed her in the educable retarded range, and experience gives me little reason to doubt this rough measurement, it seems to me Kari has always strived to the utmost of her capabilities. She is extremely self-motivated to learn about things that interest her. They say people never use their full intellectual potential. In some areas, Kari must come close.

Even so, situations arise with the computer that she is not able to cope with completely on her own. For instance, reading carefully

detailed instructions from a manual and carrying them out on the computer can be very difficult, especially when one's eye-hand co-ordination isn't that great and the language used is unfamiliar. At these times, the enthusiastic support of another person can help. Kari and I share many hours together at the computer. I believe a facilitator is essential for her to get the optimum use from the equipment. Without a facilitator, she would likely become frustrated and discouraged and might lose her zeal for exploring and experimenting.

Another factor and perhaps the greatest of them all is cost. Who wouldn't want a system like Kari's for their child? Computers may be available, but they are not cheap. It is with great humility that I tell you that Kari's was a gift to her from a stupendously kind and generous person, whom we have never met. I still find it overwhelming that someone would do this for a stranger and I am still in awe that Kari was the lucky recipient. This caring and generosity from an unknown friend has enriched our lives beyond measure.

When Kari first drove her chair up to her magnificent array of equipment, I wondered if her use of it would ever justify such an expenditure. When we put her to bed well past midnight that first day, so tired she couldn't hold her head up but still sparkling with happiness, I KNEW she would!

\* \* \* \* \*

## Kari's News

I have been lucky a lot of times but I just have to tell you how I got even luckier this month. In fact, I don't believe what happened to me. That's why I decided to write about it.

Before I got my first disability allowance cheque, I decided I would save \$100.00 each month for an Apple II computer. After a few weeks, I got my first cheque and deposited \$100.00 in my computer account. Then Mrs. McNaughton, my symbol teacher, phoned to tell us some exciting news. Her friend, Mrs. Berman, read all about Justin Clark and she wanted to do something special. She asked Mrs. McNaughton what

she could do that would be special. Mrs. McNaughton told her about me and showed her some of my stories. She told Mrs. Berman how an Apple II computer could help me so much and Mrs. Berman decided to get me one. Well, I just jumped for joy!

Now that you know why I'm so lucky and so excited that I want to write about it, I'll tell you what I did last Thursday. I went to the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre to see what I can do on the computer and to talk about what I need. Several staff from OCCC and BCI were there to help. Here is what they would like me to have: an Apple II E, a word processor, a voice synthesizer for talking on the telephone, a telephone modem which lets my computer hook up with many other computers, one or two disk drives, 50 disks and some other things I will need. I might not get all those things, but I am getting the computer for sure!

Now I am going to tell you what I think it will be like to have a computer at home. We have a Pet at school, but I think it is different to have your very own computer at home. After I use it for a while, I'll tell you what it is really like to have one in "Lucky Me, Part 2."

Right now we don't know where we will put it when we get it. The kitchen is already full with the TV and the Vista. I share a room with my sister so there is not really space for it there. When we decide on a good place, my dad will build a special desk.

First I want to talk about the voice synthesizer and tell you what I think it will be good for and what might not be too great about it. My Uncle Ross works for Bell Canada and he gave me a Visual Ear. The Visual Ear is really for the deaf people to talk on the telephone. It also helps people with speech problems like me. To talk with a Visual Ear on the phone, the person on the other end has to have one too. There is only one of my friends who has one and we phone each other one or two times a week. The voice synthesizer is for talking on the telephone too, but the nicest thing about it is I can phone anyone. They don't have to have one too.



When mom phones my grandma, I sometimes talk to her. Well it's not really talking. Most of the time she asks me some "yes" and "no" questions. With the voice synthesizer, I will be able to say everything I want to tell her. I can talk to my best friend, Joy, and maybe even some of my friends at school. There are a lot of people that I would love to talk to on the phone. I'll be as bad as my sister!

The other thing I think it will be great for is to say what I want to say while my mom is working. Usually she or my dad have to stand beside me and watch what I'm saying on my board or watch my hand to see what I am signing. The only thing that might trick people is that it will have a man's voice. I will just have to tell them that my voice changed.

There are two things I wonder about: what it does when I spell a word wrong and where I put the phone so both the person and I can hear what we are saying to each other. When I get the answers I will write about them in Part 2.

There is one thing I didn't tell you yet. I have a boyfriend who talks with Blissymbols too. He has an Apple II at home, but no printer yet, so he uses the one at his school. I already know that you can get symbols on the computer because he writes me on his. That's why I wanted an Apple II rather than any other kind. It will write Blissymbols.

The word processor will help me to do my homework. Some disks will have school work to help me to learn more and I'll have a holder to keep them all in. I will be able to write letters and stories. There will be games I know and some new ones.

When I get it, I'll write this whole story on the word processor, even "Lucky Me, Part 2." Right now, I think I'll sit back and wait for it. It'll be a month or longer before it comes, but at least I know it's coming and I don't have to save my own money to get it.□

#### *Editor's Note:*

We're all very lucky there are couples like the Bermans who care about young people like Kari.

## International News



### Communicating Together — Internationally The Fourth BCI European Affiliate Meeting

Belgium • Canada • Denmark  
Israel • Italy • The Netherlands  
Norway • Portugal • Sweden  
United Kingdom  
West Germany

In 1979, we met in Toronto, Canada; in 1980 Cardiff, Wales; in 1982 Wallingford, England; and in October 1983 the meeting moved to Catania, Italy. With each gathering of the BCI Affiliates and their associates, the sharing has become more productive and more meaningful. Their growing knowledge of Blissymbolics and other augmentative communication systems and their increasing experience in international communication allow the participants to build on the friendship and respect engendered at former meetings and to concentrate upon the common interest held by everyone — facilitating effective Blissymbol communication. Language and cultural differences are always there and they can present formidable challenges, but the difficulties melt away in the constructive excitement of five days of discussion.

From early morning to midnight or later, the residence and meeting rooms echoed with dialogue — sometimes in English, sometimes in Italian, sometimes in French. Over twenty persons from the eleven participating countries focussed attention upon system considerations, training, assessment, instruction, material development, technology, research and organizational matters. Those present represented speech pathology, special education, medicine, psychology, occupational therapy and engineering.

We appreciated the innovative schedule that provided formal discussion early each morning, sightseeing over mid-day, and formal meetings in the late afternoon and evening. It gave us all a welcomed change of pace, an appreciation of the beauty of the west coast of Sicily and of the powerful presence of Mount Etna. It also provided an opportunity for relaxed conversation, reactions to new ideas and problem solving as we sat with many different companions on the sightseeing bus.

The special hospitality and charm of our Italian hosts was evident throughout the week. It began with the formal greetings on the first day in which problems relating to leaks in the roof were explained away "because all the good Sicilian builders had left Catania for Toronto." It continued through the week with picnics on the bus and in parks, stopping for homemade wine, opportunities for exploring the shops and sights of Sicily. It was present at the last night banquet when the president, administrator and all the medical consultants proudly wore their Danish-produced BCI logo pins. We gained insight into the energy, the humour and determination that has permitted special programs for the physically disabled to be introduced in Sicily in spite of the many economic hardships faced by its people.

New publications, a better exchange of materials, research ideas, improved technology and better training programs will all result from this fourth international meeting. The most important accomplishment, however, is a much broader one. We had the exciting opportunity of *communicating together* across language, cultural and experiential differences. In so doing, we left the meeting feeling better able to help others and enriched by our successful experience.□



## A Translation First

One of the many exciting developments in Blissymbolics during 1983 was the publishing of *Blissymbols For Use* into the five Nordic languages: Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Icelandic.

After the translations were completed by members of the Nordic Blissymbolics Committee, all five versions were printed simultaneously by a printer in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is believed that this is the first time a publication of any kind has been translated and published in all these languages at the same time.

In "Finding Symbols", the first section of the book, each symbol appears with the appropriate word translated in the five Nordic languages as well as English. The "Finding Meaning" section is translated separately in each language.

Congratulations from BCI and *Communicating Together* to everyone who worked on this fine co-operative effort. □



*Shirley McNaughton, Canada; Kerstin Lörström, Kerstin Wester, Sweden; and Judy Seligman-Wine, Israel review the Nordic edition of Blissymbols For Use.*

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## THE NONSPEECH TEST

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# The Development of Blissymbol Stamps in Israel

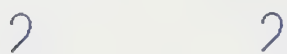
by Judy Seligman-Wine

*Judy Seligman-Wine, a speech pathologist, was a member of the original team at Ontario Crippled Children's Centre which adapted Blissymbols for use by nonspeaking populations. She is a Senior Presenter for the Blissymbolics Communication Institute and member of BCI International Symbol Panel. In 1974 she emigrated to Israel, where she teaches Blissymbol workshops and has set up programs throughout the country.*

Blissymbol stamps in Hebrew have recently been completed in Israel, similar in content and format to those produced by BCI. These stamps are used by individuals whose native language is Hebrew. We feel that the varied and language specific problems which had to be considered in doing this translation may be useful to others.

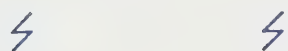
The first major consideration was that Hebrew is written from right-to-left. After much discussion and deliberation it was decided that, in order to be consistent with the native language, symbols with more than one component would also have to be written from right to left. This decision was supported by BCI. In carrying out this requirement, the working guideline was that simple symbols would retain their original orientation.

e.g. ear                      remained



English                      Hebrew

electricity                      remained

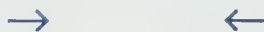


English                      Hebrew

However the inherent meaning of some simple symbols is determined

by their direction or orientation. In such cases, the orientation of the symbols was reversed.

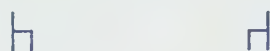
e.g. forward                      became



English                      Hebrew

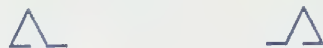
A few additional simple symbols were also reversed because of problems of visual logic when they are used as components of compound symbols.

e.g. chair                      became



English                      Hebrew

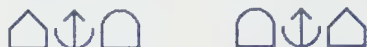
legs and feet                      became



English                      Hebrew

The right to left ordering of compound symbols resulted in some cases in a simple mirror image.

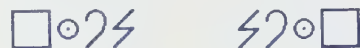
e.g. school                      became



English                      Hebrew

In other cases, the retention of original orientation of some components necessitated a new graphic presentation.

e.g. television                      became



English                      Hebrew

The second major consideration was the vocabulary differences which exist between English and Hebrew; between different cultural, ethnic and climatic backgrounds of North America and the Middle East. In addition, users in Israel required new symbols to represent various

aspects of Jewish religious and ceremonial life. The difficulties encountered here were as follows.

(1) Some concepts are not interpreted in the same way in all cultures and in all countries. For example, in many countries, winter is the season of snow; in Israel and other Middle Eastern countries it is the season of rain. Blissymbol synonyms provided a solution to this difficulty.

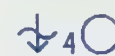
winter



season 4 + snow

English  
(Northern Hemisphere)

winter



rain + 4 season

Hebrew  
(Middle East)

(2) Some Blissymbols which are represented by one part of speech in English are most correctly represented by a different part of speech in Hebrew. For example *afraid*, *excited*, *engaged* are all adjectives in English but these concepts are expressed by verbs in Hebrew. *Dark*, an adjective in English, is a noun in Hebrew. Symbols for Hebrew words are accordingly printed in the grammatical form most naturally used in Hebrew.

(3) English Blissymbol stamps contain symbols for concepts which are not needed in Israel and were therefore omitted from the Hebrew vocabulary, either because they do not exist as concepts in Hebrew, e.g. *sibling*, *home* (house and home are one concept) or because of infrequent usage, e.g. *ice hockey*, *snowsuit*, etc.

(4) Similarly, there are Blissymbols for concepts which in English are represented by two different words but in Hebrew are only one concept, e.g. *jealous* and *envious*, *to like* and *love*. Therefore a choice had to be made as to which symbol



to use. Conversely, there are concepts which are represented by one Blissymbol in English, but require two in Hebrew. For example the general term *underwear* which is commonly used in English does not exist in Hebrew. Therefore two new compound symbols, *undershirt* and *underpants* had to be created. (See *Communicating Together*, Volume 1, Number 1.)

(5) Even when a concept is represented by a Blissymbol in both English and Hebrew, there is not always an appropriate one-to-one translation of the accompanying word. In all instances, the translation chosen related to the meaning portrayed by the symbol components. For example, although sports are played in Israel as elsewhere in the world, there is no Hebrew word for score. The closest equivalent is *result* (the *results* of the game were ...).

(6) Many new Blissymbols were needed to represent varying aspects of life in Israel such as warm weather clothing — shorts, sandals; foods; religious holidays; religious artifacts; the months of the lunar calendar; the kibbutz; etc. In many cases these were represented as compound Blissymbols and in several instances new pictographs were developed using shapes found throughout Blissymbolics.

grapes



ten commandments



In all cases, the new symbols were developed by a group of people with a good knowledge of Blissymbols and of the users' abilities and needs.

All proposed new symbols for Hebrew users were submitted to the Blissymbolics Communication Institute and after consultation and discussion some changes were made. The final form of the proposed new symbols then passed through the established BCI procedures for authorization of standard new vocabulary. The final step was the production of the Blissymbol stamps in Hebrew.

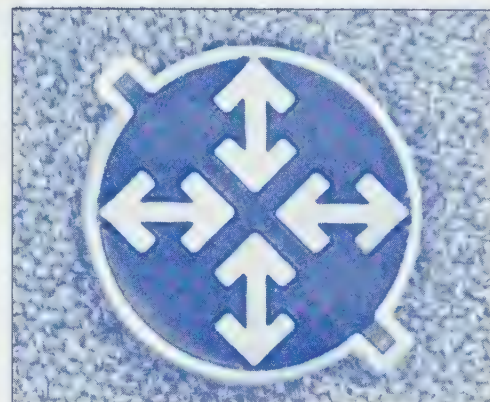
It is hoped that this summary of our experiences in translating Blissymbols for use with persons whose native language is Hebrew will be of help to others who are attempting to work with Blissymbols with non-English speaking populations. In conclusion, it must be said that through this exercise we all gained a much better understanding and appreciation of Blissymbolics.□

\* \* \* \* \*

## BCI Announces New Appointment

Claudia Wood has assumed the half-time position of Symbol System Coordinator at BCI. Claudia comes to us from the MacKay Centre in Montreal, Quebec where she taught the augmentative communication class for seven years. She has been involved with Blissymbols since 1975 and is an independent Senior Presenter.

Claudia is responsible for coordinating the continuing development of the Blissymbol system. She works with an international panel of advisors, and local symbol consultants, one of whom is her predecessor Jinny Storr. She will be answering inquiries about symbols and is anxious to hear from people using the system or working with it, regarding their symbol needs and concerns.□



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# Teaching and Learning




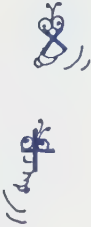

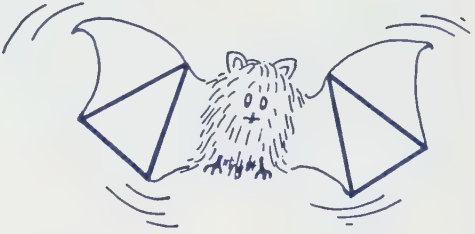

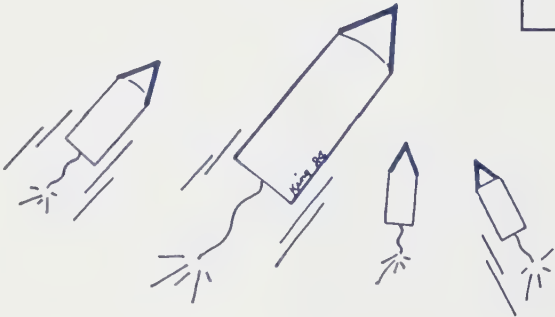

## Teaching the Blissymbol Alphabet

We offer the alphabet cards each issue to encourage instructors (1) to teach the Blissymbol Alphabet to students who are ready to begin personal dictionaries and (2) to think about ways in which languages are structured. Instructors might like to focus as well on the

international benefits of the Blissymbol Alphabet:

- The Alphabet provides a single ordering system for Blissymbols, even when accompanied by words in languages other than English.
- If students look up a specific Blissymbol, they can locate its associated words without spelling.

Of course, this international cataloguing system is of special benefit to BCI and its affiliates. A symbol catalogue using the Blissymbol Alphabet ordering scheme also provides an easy way of storing and accessing the 13 languages into which Blissymbol stamps are being translated. (The symbol, rather than a word, is the beginning reference point.)

  <p>NEXT COME ALL THE CROSSES</p>	  <p>WITH ISOSCELES TRIANGLE JUST BESIDE</p>
  <p>AS WE ADD THE ACUTE ANGLES</p>	 <p>I'M READY TO RUN AWAY AND HIDE</p>





## More on Interaction

by Janice Light

*Janice Light has been a special education teacher with the Carlton Board of Education in Ontario for several years. She is presently working on her MA at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. As part of her thesis, she is involved in research which is examining communicative interaction involving young nonspeaking physically handicapped children.*

In the last issue of *Communicating Together* (Volume 1, Number 4), Andrea Blau stressed the importance of communicative competence in interaction between speaking and nonspeaking individuals. She suggested that communicative competence is largely dependent on each participant's ability to meet the other halfway. Each of us, whether speaking or nonspeaking, brings to an interaction our own perspectives — a unique blend of needs, abilities, personality, interaction style, communication system and experiences. We must understand our partner's perspectives in order to successfully exchange information, thoughts and feelings.

We are currently involved in a research project at the Augmentative Communication Service in the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, with the goal of examining interaction between nonspeaking children and speaking adults. From this research, we hope to gain a better understanding of how nonspeaking children and speaking adults find a shared ground in their interaction and of what problems they encounter in their "negotiations". In this article, I will look at some of the difficulties and will suggest some ideas for facilitating successful interaction.

Certainly, interactions involving nonspeaking children and speaking adults are as diverse as the combinations of the individuals involved. Generalizations must only be made with caution. The preliminary findings of our research to date, however, have indicated a general pattern.

In interaction with nonspeaking children, we, the speaking adults,

take the lead and dominate the interaction, while the children primarily follow our lead. If communication is compared to a game of catch, the speaking adults almost always start the game. We throw the "conversational ball" to the children and catch the ball when it is thrown to us. Nonspeaking children are quite skilled at catching the ball when we throw it to them, but they have difficulty throwing the ball back to us in order to keep the game going.

### The Speaking Partner's Role

Speaking adults typically dominate a conversation in the following ways.

(1) We "talk" more frequently than our nonspeaking partners. We seem to be uncomfortable with the periods of silence that accompany our partner's slower rate of communication. We "fill the gaps" by repeating or rephrasing our questions and comments even though they have already been heard and understood.

(2) We choose most of the topics of conversation.

(3) Many of the topics we choose are ones which are already known to us. We frequently ask questions to which we already know the answer and "test" the child's ability to provide the response.

(4) We usually ask specific questions and thus limit the possible responses the nonspeaking child may give us. Our understanding of the child's response is considerably easier when we can anticipate the nature of the response. (For example, by asking the question "What are you having for lunch today?" we expect a food item response.)

(5) We ask a great many yes/no questions. In this way we limit the demands that we put on our nonspeaking partners, but we also limit their participation in the exchange to confirming or denying information we suggest.

(6) We are sometimes unsure as to whether or not the children have completed their messages, especially when they are using communication boards. As a result, we sometimes misinterpret or interrupt before the message is complete.

### The Nonspeaking Partner's Role

Since we dominate the interaction, the nonspeaking children often adopt a relatively passive role in the exchange. In general, their participation in interaction with speaking adults can be described as follows.

(1) The children usually pay attention to our conversation and actions, but they do not always take the floor when it is their turn to communicate. Perhaps, they are not especially interested in many of the topics we choose. Perhaps, they may not feel it's worthwhile to expend the energy required to respond to our "test" questions, realizing that we already know the answers.

(2) When the children do respond to our questions and comments, they usually provide appropriate information.

(3) The children have more difficulty initiating their own topics and suggesting new ideas in the conversation. When they do take the lead, we tend to miss these initiations because we are busy pursuing our own agenda.

(4) The children are able to communicate for many purposes: to greet individuals, to terminate conversation, to request objects or activities, to request assistance, to request information, to request clarification, to request attention, to provide information, to provide clarification, to confirm or deny statements or questions and to express feelings. However, in typical interaction with adults, they rarely demonstrate their range of abilities.

(5) Nonspeaking children seem to have difficulty choosing and organizing information to communicate when the context is *not* already known to their adult partner.

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(6) Nonspeaking children have very few opportunities to communicate on topics which are novel to their partners. Most of their daily exchanges seem to be "routine" ones.

(7) Nonspeaking children recognize when their speaking partners have not understood. Many of the children have difficulty, however, repairing the conversation. They rely primarily on repeating their message, when in fact they may need to provide additional information, use another system of communication or modify the content of the message to ensure that their partner understands.

### **Suggestions to the Speaking Partner for Improved Interaction**

As we interact with nonspeaking children, we must relinquish control over the exchange and reduce our dominance. Our goal should be to improve our skills at the game of catch so that the conversational ball is kept in play. We should facilitate successful interaction with our nonspeaking partners — interaction which is the shared responsibility of both participants. The fact is we do not expect enough from our nonspeaking partners. We need to encourage their full participation in the exchange. We can facilitate better interaction in the following ways:

(1) We can talk less and allow our nonspeaking partners a more equitable share of the conversational floor. We need to learn to tolerate the silence, to wait and allow our partners the opportunity and time to participate in the conversation.

(2) We can ensure that we know what signals our nonspeaking partners use to indicate the end of their message, so that we do not interrupt our partners in mid-communication and "speak for them" in the exchange.

(3) We can follow our nonspeaking partner's lead in the exchange. We can learn to listen and watch so that we are aware when our nonspeaking partners attempt to initiate a topic. We can then respond to these attempts.

(4) Since the purpose of communication is to exchange information, thoughts and feelings, we can

ensure that our interactions with nonspeaking children are truly communicative and not just routine exchanges and "test" routines. We need to explore topics where information, ideas and opinions can truly be shared by both participants.

(5) We can ask more open-ended questions and allow our nonspeaking partners a broader range of responses. Yes/no questions serve a function in confirming messages and facilitating communication when time is limited, but they should not dominate our conversations.

(6) We can provide our nonspeaking partners with feedback which honestly conveys our perspective. Sometimes nonspeaking children send messages we find confusing; sometimes the intent behind the message is unclear. We must inform our partners of the strategies that we find most effective and those that are confusing.

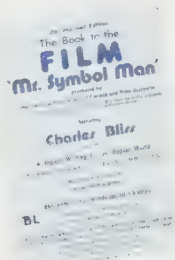
### **Suggestions to the Nonspeaker for Improved Interaction**

Nonspeaking children need to learn the skills required to help us in the conversation and to share responsibility in the exchange. As

Andrea Blau stated in her article, "... it is equally important for the nonspeaker to understand our perspectives and take responsibility in helping us during the conversation." We can encourage nonspeaking children to acquire and practice these skills, in the following ways.

(1) The nonspeaker needs to learn effective techniques to initiate interaction. I witnessed the following incident involving a six-year-old boy with cerebral palsy. His glasses had fallen across his face and he was clearly unhappy, but he simply sat and waited for someone to notice his predicament. This boy urgently needs to learn the means to request someone's attention. He needs to learn to mark his initiations with an attention-getting signal — a vocalization, a bell, a bang on his lap tray, a touch on his partner's arm.

(2) Nonspeaking children need opportunities to practice "throwing" the conversational ball back to their partners. They need opportunities to practice requesting information. Guessing games and games of twenty questions can provide these opportunities. Interviews and reporting assignments can provide children with opportunities to request information in conversational exchange.



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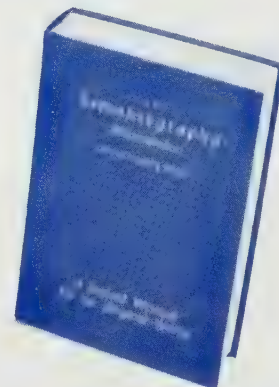
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(3) Nonspeaking children need opportunities to converse on topics which are novel to their partners. They need practice learning to extract the important information, to choose appropriate vocabulary to express the information and to organize it in logical sequence. It is often inefficient and inappropriate for nonspeaking children to adhere to strict grammatical form in informal exchanges. The most effective strategies for organizing information may vary from individual to individual and from situation to situation. These strategies will best be developed by the nonspeaking children themselves through their own experiences.

(4) Nonspeaking children need to be given vocabulary to allow them to develop skill in communicating messages such as:

- Let's start again.
- Wrong!
- Please don't interrupt.
- I need a symbol/word/picture.
- I don't know/I don't understand.
- I need help.

(5) Participants in conversations sometimes misunderstand each other and communication breaks down. Nonspeaking children need to learn effective techniques to repair conversation. When conversation does break down, the child needs to brainstorm with the adult to determine the best approach for repairing it. The adult may need to demonstrate various techniques, such as providing additional information, modifying content and using additional communication systems and strategies.

In all communication, it is the quality of the interaction that is most important. If learning to communicate effectively is compared to learning to play catch, then it is apparent that while either player can start the game, both players must share the responsibility of keeping the game going. Each player must learn to catch his/her partner's ball without dropping it, and to throw the ball back as accurately as possible. As with a game of catch, successful and meaningful interaction is dependent on each participant, whether speaking or nonspeaking, learning to understand the other partner's perspective and learning to meet the other person halfway. □

## Sharing Ideas With Nora

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±|+| ∩ ++ Δ N



*"Sharing Ideas with Nora" is a forum for sharing information concerning all aspects of Augmentative Communication. Nora Rothschild, consultant with the Augmentative Communication Service of the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, heads up this regular column focusing on readers questions, answers, problems and experiences.*

The following are excerpts from a letter sent by Caroline Musselwhite, speech pathologist at Irene Wortham Center in Asherville, North Carolina.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have been getting a lot of requests to introduce augmentative communication systems such as finger spelling, signing, Blissymbolics, Picsyms, etc. to various groups of young people (schools, scouts, Sunday schools). I really hate to say "no" as the public relations for this new field is so valuable. However I have been finding that it is taking time and some financial resources from my job at the Irene Wortham Centre.

I have therefore started asking each group to "contract" with me to donate time and/or materials to the Center. The following are three projects which have been recently initiated.

(1) A grade 6 class whose members are fascinated by Blissymbols is making a banner in Blissymbolics (using felt, burlap, etc.) for the entranceway to our building. In addition they are making individual banners for each specific area of the Center.

(2) A scout troop which loved learning about American Sign Language has agreed to illustrate 15 signs. These illustrations will be made into a calendar for the bulletin boards so that as each page is pulled off, the new "sign-of-the-week" will be visible for parents and staff to learn.

(3) Two Sunday School classes (ages 3-8 years) made God's Eyes (yarn crafts made by wrapping yarn around 2 sticks joined in a cross). These were very bright and were placed in cribs or on walls for visual stimulation.

Each of these projects is one I had tried for several months to find the time to do myself or had attempted to interest an adult group in. The kids are really enthusiastic and are turning out great and useful products as "payment" for their training.

Another idea which I have used is a preschool exchange program with a local preschool for non-disabled children. We are combining it with "New Friends"\* — the disabled dolls — and it's proving to be very successful. This program is described more fully in *Communication Outlook*, Volume 5, Number 2.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many thanks to Caroline Musselwhite for sharing these ideas with our readers. If you have any ideas which you would like to share with others, please drop a line to: Nora Rothschild, *Communicating Together*, Blissymbolics Communication Institute.

\*New Friends is a program developed by the Chapel Hill Training Outreach Project under the direction of Shelley Hockin. The program utilizes inexpensive hand-made dolls to "introduce children to individual differences and effectively reduce negative attitudes toward disabled individuals."



# Blissymbol Talk



*This section focuses on the Blissymbolics system itself. For those already familiar with Blissymbolics, new symbols and new ways of looking at the system are introduced. For those new to the system, an introduction to standard Blissymbols is given, including new ways to use the symbols. The quiz is for everyone.*

## A Symbol Quiz

1. Find the error in Quiz answers in the Fall 1983 issue (p.19).
2. Translate into Blissymbols:  
We enjoyed my friends' caravan.

3. Translate into words:



4. Give North American synonyms for caravan.

## For New Symbol Users

Listed are four more symbols for your vocabulary.

### (to) teach



to give + knowledge +  
action indicator

### school



building + to teach: a building where teaching goes on

### (to) like



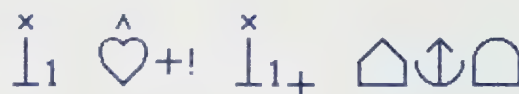
good + action indicator: to  
feel that something is good,  
worth liking

### friend

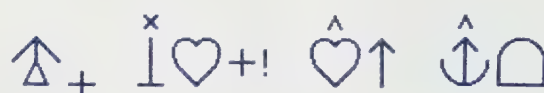


person + to like: a person  
whom one likes

## Introducing the Possessive



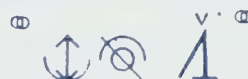
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# Augmentative Communication



## Comments on Terminology

by Lyle L. Lloyd



*Lyle L. Lloyd is Professor and Chairman of Special Education, and Professor of Audiology and Speech Sciences, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. Having recently been awarded a Fulbright grant, Dr. Lloyd is presently conducting research on augmentative and alternative communication in the United Kingdom.*

There is a lack of agreement as to terminology among those of us concerned with communication by the more severely handicapped. We do not use a single common term to describe our use of communication symbols in place of or in addition to spoken symbols. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Position Paper on Nonspeech Communication (ASHA, 1981) partially addressed the issue, but still did not suggest a term upon which we could all agree. I therefore offer the following comments to stimulate further discussion.

Many of us working in this area do not yet consider any of the commonly used terms as ideal descriptors. Even "nonspeech communication" — a term we at Purdue feel describes reasonably well

what we're doing — doesn't quite define it. In using this term we know we are not always talking about communication taking place with no speech at all. (In fact, we frequently use other symbols with speech such as manual signs, Bliss-symbols, etc.) Still, many of the books specifically on the topic or with portions devoted to it use the term "nonspeech".

"Nonvocal" and "nonoral" are other terms frequently used. But again, quite often oral or vocal aspects are involved in the communication, sometimes not in the form of speech, but in what are called nonverbal (or para-linguistic) aspects of communication, with the more precise symbolic representation being by manual or graphic symbols. So, "nonvocal" is not an appropriate descriptor, either.

Although "nonverbal" has been used in the past, it is not currently used to refer to the use of augmentative and alternative symbols. The term has been, in fact, somewhat confusing. It has been used by some professionals to mean linguistic communication other than speech, while other professionals have limited its use to non-linguistic forms of communication — more typically at the signalling rather than symbolic level. Nonverbal communication has more recently referred in large part to what laymen and popular psychology literature refer to as "body language," while "verbal" has been frequently used as a synonym for speech. In fact, the ambiguity associated with the term "verbal" is the reason why most of us have limited our use of the term "nonverbal".

Professionals, however, frequently use the term to relate to words, language or linguistic aspects, as in "the verbal aspects of measured intelligence". Even if we cannot agree on a single acceptable term for all to use in talking about our activities in this area, I personally feel that "nonverbal" is the one term we should *not* use for our general area of activity (though it may be appropriate in its more restricted or pure sense when related

to para-linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of communication).

The term "augmentative communication" is frequently used, and some think it the ideal term. It is a reasonably good term, I agree, but we also have terms like "assistive" and "alternative" (although many tend to feel that neither of these is a very good descriptor for the broad area we are dealing with). We can, however, accept terms like augmentative or alternative, providing people don't believe either of these to be the only acceptable term.

As we consider the terms "alternative" and "augmentative," it is important to keep in mind the three goals of nonspeech communication: (1) provision of a temporary means of communication until spoken communication is re-established to the point that it is (or becomes) adequate; (2) provision of a lifelong means of communication where spoken communication does not become functional; and (3) provision of a means for facilitating development (or re-establishment) of spoken communication (modified from Fristoe & Lloyd, 1979, p.403).

Thus, for some individuals we are talking about *augmenting* speech, and in other cases we are talking about *alternatives* to speech. Clinicians, teachers and researchers all have to be as realistic as possible about these things. That is why we tend to use the term "nonspeech" (as in Second International Conference on Nonspeech Communication), rather than "augmentative", even though there are obvious inadequacies in that term as well. This is not to say "nonspeech" is best, but it is operational for us at Purdue.

The other option is to use both terms, as we chose to do in founding the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) in May 1983, but using both terms can become awkward in many communication situations.

In addition to not agreeing on what we call our use of communication symbols in place of and/or in addition to spoken symbols, we



have not reached agreement on our use of terms within this area (e.g. sign, symbol, etc.). However, we at Purdue have been using a set of operational terms and definitions. These were recently presented as follows:

- *Speech* is the spoken — voiced and articulated — output of the communication system.
- *Language* is a conventional set of arbitrary symbols, and a set of rules for combining these symbols, to represent ideas about the world for the purposes of communication.
- *Communication* is the transmission of meaning from one individual to another whatever the means used (verbal, with and without speech; nonverbal, with and without vocal output). Communication implies a process of social interaction.
- *Symbols* are spoken, graphic or manual representations of objects, actions, relationships, etc. While spoken symbols are temporal and are conveyed through the auditory-vocal modality, graphic and manual symbols are spatial or spatial/temporal and are conveyed through the visual modality.
- *Gestures* and *signs* are two related types of manual symbols used in nonspeech communication. Signs are gestures that have been conventionalized and conform to certain rules or are constrained in their formation and usage; gestures have no such linguistic constraints, but do have cultural interpretations. Most signs — the linguistic elements of meaning in sign language — are relatively abstract, while gestures tend to be concrete. The meaning of most gestures can often be guessed while the meaning of most signs cannot.

Gestures and manual signs may also be referred to as unaided symbols because they do not require any aids or devices, but use only the sender's face, head, hands, arms and other parts of the body. (They are also frequently referred to as manual.) "Unaided symbols" are what are called nonenduring, and frequently involve movement or change. In many instances, the change carries much of the meaning and, therefore, the symbols may be thought of as dynamic. Examples of

#### Unaided

Pointing  
Yes/no gestures  
Mime  
Generally understood gestures  
Amer-Ind  
Other gestures  
Esoteric signs  
ASL (Ameslan), BSL, etc.  
Manually coded English (e.g. signed English, PGSS, SEE-I, SEE-II)  
Manual alphabet  
Gestural Morse Code  
Eye blink codes  
Vocal codes  
Hand-cued speech

Table I

#### Communication Symbols And Symbol Systems\*

(Karlán & Lloyd, in preparation)

#### Aided

Objects  
Pictures (e.g. PCS)  
Basic rebus (pictures)  
Picsyms  
Pictogram Ideogram Communication (PIC)  
Blissymbols  
Expanded rebus  
Other logographs  
Lana Lexigrams  
Premack-type symbols  
Printed words (TO)  
Writing (TO)  
Modified Orthography  
Braille and other vibrotactal codes  
Linear printing (e.g. WRITE)  
Synthetic Speech (e.g. SAL, SPEEC)

\*These are "formal" or conventionalized symbols and system. Informal nonverbal behaviours or ritualized behaviours have not been included.

unaided symbols are listed in the left column of Table I.

We refer to the other group of nonspeech symbols and systems as "aided" since they require some type of external assistance, or an aid or device such as paper, pencil, pictures, charts, communication boards and in some cases even electronic devices. With the exception of objects, they all involve graphic symbols and frequently are relatively fixed or permanent (i.e. remain available in the same form). They may be thought of as more static than unaided systems (Lloyd & Karlán, 1982). Examples of aided symbols are listed in the right column of Table I.

It should be relatively easy for us to agree upon most of the above operational definitions, but in doing so it should be recognised that different authors in such areas as cognitive and language development, linguistics, pragmatics and speech act theory may use "sign", and "symbol" differently. Some may use "sign" as a general representational term having either three levels (icon, index and symbol), or two levels (signal and symbol). Others use "sign", "signal" or "index" for a basic, concrete level of communication, in which the

referent is present, and "symbol" for a higher or representational level of communication. In our operational definitions we would use "signal" (or "index") for the basic (and clearly non-linguistic) level, and symbol for the higher representational level. This avoids confusion of "sign" as the general representational term, with "manual sign" as in the sign languages of the deaf and the pedagogical sign systems. □

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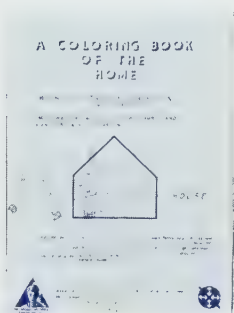


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### Editor's Note:

Our thanks to Lyle Lloyd for sharing his opinions and expertise on terminology. We invite readers with differing points of view to contribute their ideas and thoughts in future issues.



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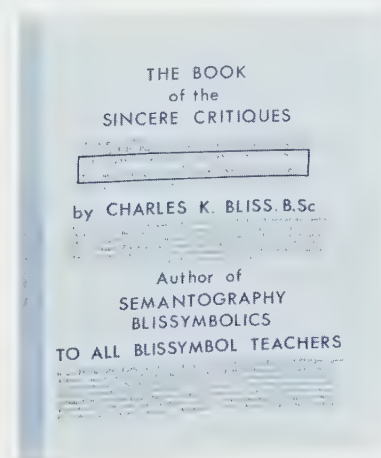
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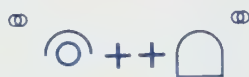
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# Perspective



## An Interview with Howard Shane

by Barbara Collier



Howard Shane

*Howard Shane, a speech pathologist, is Director of the Communication Enhancement Clinic at The Children's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. He is Vice-President elect of Conferences for the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). In this capacity, he is involved in the planning of the upcoming Third International Nonspeech Conference in Boston, October 18-20, 1984. On his last visit to Toronto, he talked with Barbara Collier, consultant with the Augmentative Communication Service at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, and shared some of his thoughts about the growth of augmentative communication in the last decade.*

I've been involved in augmentative communication for over a decade, and I'd like to make just a few comments on how, from my perspective, things have changed and how, for me, they actually began.

It all started in 1969 when I invented the communication board — or at least I thought I'd invented

the communication board. You see, in 1969 I was working as a teacher for the multi-handicapped in a residential setting for the mentally retarded, where my classroom was in the basement of a pretty dreary building. Many of the children I was working with were mentally retarded; others had severe communication disorders related to cerebral palsy. In either case, speech was incomprehensible or nonexistent. I knew from their gestures and facial expressions, however, that they had many things to say, couldn't say them and obviously needed a way to facilitate their communication. So I "invented" a communication board made up of words and pictures. My colleagues and I then went on to develop a little electronic scanning board using the stepping mechanism from some old telephone company equipment and then, of course, we thought we'd invented the *electronic* communication board!

It's rather interesting to tell it now. There I was working in a tiny segment of the world in the western part of Massachusetts in this residential snake pit where people were not treated as human beings. With virtually no input from the rest of the world, emerged a communication board for people who couldn't speak.

Emile Froechels, a German physician whose work was primarily focussed on voice disorders, once said that if people read more they would discover less. I think that had I read more, had I known more, I would have realized that I didn't in fact invent the communication board — that it was being invented or had been invented by many of the same people who are now my colleagues and doing similar clinical and technical work. Perhaps they too thought they had invented the communication board in their little pockets of the world. As I began to meet people from all over, and as I read more, I learned about communication systems as conceived by so many other people. Much of this exploration was in

fact being done by parents, and by creative professionals many of whom weren't actually charged with an assignment to do so. They developed the systems simply because there was a need to facilitate communication for people who were incapable of speaking.

### The Past

When one considers the literature in this area there is a paucity of information, particularly before 1970. I'd like to comment on an interesting paper written by a gentleman by the name of F. Hall Roe which appeared in 1948. It was a paper he delivered to the Spastics Aid Society in Chicago. He titles the paper "The Evolution of my Walkie Talkie." It is a discussion of how he first came to use a manual communication aid. He notes that his family out of frustration tore the cover from an old book, and then enscribed some letters and numbers to which he pointed in order to express himself. Eventually that book cover evolved into a much more elaborate and sophisticated system. He discussed for example how he and some friends studied and utilized the contents of a book called *Basic English*, which listed a 700-word vocabulary that its authors believed would satisfy most communicative requirements. He also talked about how his communication board became more sophisticated in order to accommodate words he used frequently, and thus increased his rate of expressive communication. Many of the issues discussed by Mr. Roe in 1948 such as rate of expression, protecting the communication aid, developmental factors in communication aid design are similar to problems facing the professionals and consumers involved in the augmentative and alternative communication movement today. It seems to suggest that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

I'm not meaning to suggest that we're no further along than we were in 1948; we're much further along and for a number of reasons.



Today, we are far more sophisticated in our technology. New technology offers greater potential for the nonspeaking individual — the ability to increase the rate and efficiency of communication, to increase the capability of working independently, to enhance educational and vocational opportunities — even for those more severely disabled than F. Hall Roe.

If we look at the history of mental retardation, we find that as a result of the industrial revolution many people who had been surviving successfully in rural agricultural environments experienced difficulty in coping with the demands of the industrial age. The industrial revolution began to unmask many cases of mental retardation. But as we move towards a more technologically oriented society for many of the severely handicapped, the reverse will happen.

### The Future

I believe technology will become the great equalizer. As the physically disabled become acquainted with computer technology, it will provide them with an opportunity to compete with able bodied people. Access to the computer will open greater educational and vocational doors. It will allow greater independence for the disabled, decrease the communication gap between speaking and nonspeaking people and help integrate the disabled into society. Some, of course, will be unable to benefit from the technology, but that does not mean they can't go to school and be educated in a community-based classroom where there is attention paid to their special needs.

I recognize that specialized instruction, the use of specialized equipment and the application of specialized symbol systems is imperative for the integration of the handicapped into society. I think that we must be sure, however, that, in our zeal to apply specialized

materials, we do not get the reverse of what we want. We must be sure that, as we promote the learning of specialized systems, we do not make the children with special needs appear more different than they already are. It's a matter of understanding the systemic implications of our work. We must keep this in mind as we continue to educate the community concerning these systems and the people who use them. From there, I think we can move on with the business of integration while still employing specialized technology and materials.

Although our goal is to make all people as near normal communicators as possible, we are not quite sure yet how technology will allow us to achieve that objective. Certainly increased application of the computer, including not yet invented hardware and software, will bring us closer to normal conversational rates, and voice quality. In the interim we need to continue to strive for normalcy, but we must also be willing to adjust our styles of conversation in order to facilitate communication between people who are speaking and nonspeaking.

I think as much as my professional goals are concerned with trying to promote communication, I am most concerned about human freedoms. When I reflect on the old abominable institutional settings, where people were denied their freedom simply because of their disability, I realize our society has had a tremendous awakening. Many of the disabled people that I now encounter in my work in a community-based clinic are not unlike the children I worked with in that first institutional setting. It has been extremely exciting for me to see that in the U.S. — and around the world — there is a movement to close down these large residential facilities, a movement to keep people in the mainstream of society.

I know that there are those who feel that there is a place for institutions in society. However, if one were to explore community based living alternatives and clinical options, one would find that more congenial living, working and educational arrangements within the

community could be created. I can understand that for many people this would seem an overwhelming task, and I don't believe every family can or should keep their children at home, but I think that there are many options that can be explored before a human being has to end up living in a residential situation. I believe, as Burton Blatt from Syracuse University has said so eloquently, "There's nothing that occurs in a residential facility that can't be done at least as well in the community." Increased work in augmentative communication only occurred when people with severe communication disorders were no longer hidden from society and began to turn up in community based clinics and schools demanding assistance in communication.

The importance of international awareness on the subject of augmentative and alternative communication has become much more clear to me. Following a meeting in which professionals from augmentative communication facilities in Switzerland, England, Sweden, Canada, the U.S. and Australia all sat at one table discussing common interests and problems, I had the comforting thought that the communication board will not need to be invented many more times. I sensed that now as developments occur anywhere in the world we are going to know about it; that efforts now are going to be more focussed on promoting an international awareness of the problems and solutions associated with augmentative communication by citizens in all countries.□

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# Research and Publications



## Research: A Nontrivial Pursuit Continued

by Geb Verburg



*Research and Publications is written by Geb Verburg, who has been involved in the field of nonspeech communication since the mid-seventies. A cognitive scientist, Mr. Verburg is currently working as Research Officer in an OCCC project investigating the use of microcomputers with the disabled.*

### Finding Answers: Part II

The first article in this series (*Communicating Together*, Volume 1, Number 4) discussed means of finding or sharing answers and information about augmentative communication devices and services. Data bases, computerized bibliographic services and teleconferencing were seen as methods of gaining access to such information.

I am writing this article for everyone who would like to find out a bit more about research. Maybe you have a question about a device, about a method of treatment, about a way of organizing communication eliciting events, and you would like to see what is involved in getting an answer to your question.

Research proper, or the activity of finding empirical answers to current questions, is a field that would require two or more large tomes for its comprehensive coverage. I say this not to discourage, but to indicate that the words that follow can do no more than refer you to sources and provide a simple structure for the research process. I will also look at a way in which the dragon statistics might come to the rescue of beleaguered clinician/researchers.

### Sources

The first book I would refer you to is Franklin Silverman's *Research Design in Speech Pathology and Audiology* (Silverman, 1977). This book grew out of a career of language and communication research and is currently being reprinted (Silverman, 1984; in press). The new edition has more information about data-bases and computer search techniques as well as sections on evaluation research.

Another source is a seven-part article called "Research Methodology and Applied Statistics" by Makrides, Richman and Prince (1980, 1981). I chose these two sources over more frequently referenced statistical textbooks because both present insiders' views on research; one from a speech pathologist's and one from a physiotherapist's point of view. For a beginning researcher, it is easier if the examples used in the text deal with familiar and real problems rather than with abstract, hypothetical or obscure situations.

A source that you will often need to call upon is "Your Local Statistician" (YLS), who may be your wife/husband, a friend, relative, or someone at the nearest university, as long as the person knows statistics. When calling upon YLS do not let him/her fluster you with technical jargon. Insist on explanations. Rather than accepting YLS's word that (ABRA) x (CADA) / (BRA) will work, you gain more out of the consultation if you understand why it will work in general terms. Statis-

tical consultation should be a kind of insight oriented therapy that will turn you into a more confident and competent clinician/researcher.

### Some Misconceptions

Silverman lists four misconceptions that clinicians might have about research, namely:

- (1) that one needs a PhD to do research,
- (2) that it takes extensive knowledge of statistics,
- (3) that it takes much time,
- (4) that one needs special personal attributes, such as precision and intelligence.

Each of these conceptions is discussed by Silverman and rejected as not necessarily valid.

### Five Steps of the Research Process

Both Silverman and Makrides et al identify several stages in the research process. I have turned these into five steps, listed below with a few comments following each.

#### Step 1. Formulating the Question(s)

It is important that the question (a) addresses a need and (b) is answerable. The question should be purposeful and be formulated precisely enough to afford a definite answer.

#### Step 2. Performing Literature Search

This helps to clarify the need or problem, can sharpen the question and can help with the research method and tool selection. Finding the right key-words to do computer literature searches is time consuming, but is a good way of immersing oneself in the field. Makrides, Richman and Prince give helpful hints for this step. They cover two abstracting and indexing services: Medlar and Excerpta Medica. They fail however to mention ERIC and NIMIS and give insufficient prominence to Psychological Abstracts and Social Science Citation Index as relevant sources for Augmentative Communication material. A local librarian can help you find these sources.



### Step 3. Planning the Design, Methodology and Procedure

This is an important step because it provides a blueprint of the research. It is essential to consult YLS here. Mentally walk through the experiment trying to anticipate all possible client (subject) responses and reactions, especially the ones that you do not expect or want. Check whether your observation measures allow you to answer the question(s). Do a few pilot runs with subjects if you are not sure about things. Ethical issues should be addressed at this stage, with informed consent and the subject's physical and psycho-social well-being as prime concerns. At this point a research proposal can be written.

### Step 4. Conducting the Research

This stage comes when the careful work of the first three steps has been completed. Hopefully your proposal has been accepted and you can go ahead with your investigation. It is a good practice to stick exactly to what you said you were going to do. When a change of method or device is being considered, be careful that the data to be collected will still provide an answer to the original question(s). Organize your data and be rigidly systematic in your observations and data collection. Be aware that any changes made in mid-stream may make earlier data incomparable with later ones. This can cause trouble in the analysis.

### Step 5. Reporting and Disseminating Results

A simple rule here is to keep in mind what are the main results and what are secondary or incidental findings. Don't let, for example, a numerically large but incidental result overshadow the presentation of the answers that you set out to find.

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## Statistics in Aid of the Clinician

Clinical practice in augmentative communication is almost entirely a one-to-one process and because every client is different from the next client, a single case study design is the most appropriate.

A study by Calculator and Luchko on the effectiveness of a communication board training program presents interesting results and a good example of a carefully designed single case study. However, descriptive studies, while highly informative, do not allow for general conclusions such as "communication method A effects changes  $m$ ,  $n$  and  $p$  in client population  $Q$ ." Such conclusions could be very helpful.

In the last five years a new statistical method has come into general use. It affords the drawing of general conclusions on the basis of descriptive research studies. The method is called meta-analysis and serves to statistically summarize the outcomes of large numbers of separate studies on a given topic. So far, the method has been used to settle such issues as the effectiveness of psychotherapy, optimal class size and a score of other knotty issues. I do not have space to go into the details of meta-analysis now, but I would like to put a suggestion and challenge to clinician/researchers who might benefit from this new statistical tool.

Up to now, meta-analysis has been used retrospectively to draw significant conclusions out of rather disorganized, highly diverse and totally unplanned collections of individual studies. I think that one can do much better by minimally orchestrating the case studies that would be included in a meta-analysis. If clinicians, parents, caregivers, consultants and teachers were provided with standard forms (e.g. device evaluation forms, a client characteristics checklist, a treatment checklist and an observed changes form) all of which were short, easy to administer and could be expanded to suit individual needs, that would conceivably help you in your clinical research efforts. The prefabricated forms would save time and trouble in the design stage and the research could start that

much sooner. These forms could be collected centrally and used in a large meta-analysis. The standardization of the information obtained could make analysis more precise and informative than the current retrospective and unplanned meta-analyses. This planned use of meta-analysis based on single case studies carried out anywhere around the world could provide a procedure for clinical decision-making, based upon the statistical findings computed from many separate instances of clinical research.

I would be interested to know if anyone in the augmentative communication field is already thinking along these lines. I welcome any feedback and suggestions about the idea of an orchestrated series of case studies. I hope I can return to this topic in a future issue, reporting your ideas and developing further the application of meta-analysis in augmentative communication research. □

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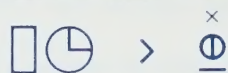
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- PSYCHINFO Psychological Abstracts Information Services, 1200 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
- SSCI Social Science Citation Index. Published by Institute for Scientific Information, 325 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19106
- ERIC Educational Resources Information Center, U.S. National Institute of Education, 1200 19th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20208
- NIMIS National Instructional Materials Information System, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, 43210
- MEDLARS/MEDLINE, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Bibliographic Services Division, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD. 20014
- Excerpta Medica Foundation, Keizersgracht 305, P.O. Box 1126, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.



# Schedule of Events



## BCI Elementary Workshops

BCI Elementary Workshop training sessions are held throughout the year and provide professionals and families with an opportunity to learn about Blissymbolics. The workshops include thirty hours of lectures, and group and individual assignments.

### Forthcoming Workshops:

#### In Ontario

—March 6-8, 1984 in Toronto

—July 3-6, 1984 in Toronto

Contact: Blissymbolics Communication Institute, 350 Rumsey Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4G 1R8. Telephone: (416) 424-3806

#### In New Brunswick

—March 26-30, 1984 in St. John

Contact: Sherry Duke, c/o Vocational Workshop, Centracare, P.O. Box 3227, Station "B", St. John, New Brunswick, Canada E2M 4H7.

#### In New York

—April 25-27, 1984 in Bohemia

Contact: Mrs. Sue Sansone, Suffolk Association for the Help Of Retarded Children, 2900 Veteran's Memorial Highway, Bohemia, New York 11716, U.S.A. Telephone: (516) 585-0100

## Correspondence Course, 1984 In Regina

In association with the Organizing Committee of the Canadian Speech and Hearing Association Conference, a BCI Elementary Workshop by correspondence will be held April/May 1984. The workshop will include two additional on-site days preceding the CSHA conference in Regina, Saskatchewan. For further information write: Mrs. Anne Warrick, 1949 Fairbanks Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1H 5Y2. Telephone: (613) 731-4439

## Blissymbolics Communication Institute

### Internship Program

June 4 - July 13, 1984

Internship is an intensive training program in Blissymbolics. It is directed towards professionals who are responsible for the introduction and support of Blissymbolics in their country or region. During this program, interns will have an opportunity to:

- complete BCI Elementary Training,
- visit several settings in the Toronto and Ottawa areas including the Augmentative Communication Service,
- attend the BCI North America Affiliate meeting,
- attend the International Congress of Rehabilitation Engineers (ICRE) in Ottawa,
- gain an overview of many recent developments in the field of augmentative communication.

Deadline for Applications: April 15, 1984.

For further information, interested applicants should contact: Mrs. Shirley McNaughton, Executive Director. Blissymbolics Communication Institute.

## Communicating with Blissymbolics One Day Seminar May 12, 1984

Place: The Westin Hotel, O'Hare, Rosemont, Illinois

.6 ASHA CEU Credits

Fee: \$65.00

Featured Presenter: Shirley McNaughton

Sponsored by:

Developmental Equipment and Center for Nonspeech Communication, Northbrook, Illinois

For further information contact:

Developmental Equipment: Blissymbolics, 981 Winnetka Terrace, Lake Zurich, Illinois 60047.

Telephone: (312) 438-3476

## Internship in Augmentative Communication

Presented by  
the Augmentative  
Communication Service  
Ontario Crippled  
Children's Centre  
Toronto, Canada

October 29 - November 16, 1984

Elementary Training in Blissymbolics required prior to acceptance in the program.

A practical clinical program focusing on the application of augmentative communication systems for the communicatively impaired. The three week program will highlight:

- communication systems
- technology
- interaction

Participants will focus on aspects of assessment and programming. Emphasis will be on the physically handicapped.

For further information contact: Karen Henry, Augmentative Communication Service, Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, 350 Rumsey Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4G 1R8.

Telephone: (416) 424-3805

## Call to Papers Fifth Annual Southeast Nonspeech Communication Conference

You are invited to contribute to the Fifth Annual Southeast Nonspeech Communication Conference to be held in Birmingham Alabama Oct. 5-6, 1984. Abstracts required by May 1, 1984.

For further information contact: Pamela S. Elder, Co-ordinator, SNCC-V, Communication Habilitation Service, 201 Sleepy Hollow Circle, Birmingham, Alabama 35216







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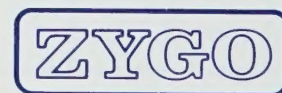
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